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AUTHOR Wirt, Frederick M.; Christovich, Leslie J.
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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this research was to determine if recent demand for more popular participation in local decision making has altered the urban executives' perceptions of their power position in local governance. The data for analysis consisted of responses to a national mail questionnaire conducted in early 1981 from city managers, planning directors, and school superintendents. Findings indicated that all three types of executives perceived an increase in local demands. Superintendents reported the largest increase. Neither the community context of the executives nor the administrators' experience explained the perceptions of increased local public demands. While perceiving more group demands, the executives have not found this participation inhibiting. All three executive types perceived heavily increased policy involvement and most reported increases in acceptance of their judgments by both political authorities and citizens. Two major reasons may be offered for these results. First, since these executives are also professionals, they receive their normative values and cues for action from professional networks as well as from politicians and citizen groups. While the local power context may strain these professional signals, these norms persist while local activity often does not. Second, the muffling of group turbulence may also arise from the segmented nature of the urban political system. While greater group demands may exist, they may be unfocused and contradictory, resulting in little policy influence. (Author/RM)

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The Politicization of American Local Executives: City Managers, Planners, and Superintendents*

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Frederick M. Wirt
Leslie J. Christovich

University of Illinois

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and

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Abstract

The Politicization of American Local Executives: City Managers, Planners and Superintendents

Frederick M. Wirt
Lealie J. Christovich

University of Illinois

This research examines the conflict between popular pressures on leadership and the leaders' desires for some degree of decision-making autonomy. In recent times there have been recurrent calls for more controls on bureaucracies to meet the democratic requirements of responsiveness and responsibility. Popular participation constitutes a potential challenge to professional autonomy in decision-making. The central purpose of this research was to determine if recent calls for more popular participation in local decision-making has altered the urban executives' perceptions of their power position in local governance.

The major hypothesis is that executive perceptions of increased local demands, as expressed through group activity, have modified these executives' perceptions of their powers. It is further hypothesized that the effect of these demands on the executives' power perceptions will vary by the context of the community and by the administrators' experience.

The data for analysis consisted of responses to a national mail questionnaire conducted in early 1981 from city managers, planning directors and school superintendents. These executives were questioned about, among other items, their perceptions of contemporary urban group demands. Increased local public demands was operationalized from the executives' perceptions of the change in influence of eight groups with potential effect on local governance. Modified local executive power was operationalized from the executives' perceptions of their degree of policy involvement and acceptance.

Findings indicated that all three types of executives perceived an increase in local demands; superintendents reported the largest increase. Neither the community context (e.g., size, reform government) of the executives nor the administrators' experience explained the perceptions of increased local public demands.

While perceiving more group demands, the executives have not found this participation inhibiting. All three executive types perceived heavily increased policy involvement and most reported increases in acceptance of their judgments by both political authorities and citizens. Local group participation does not seem to interfere with executive influence in policy-making.

Two major reasons may be offered for these results. First, since these executives are also professionals, they receive their normative values and cues for action from professional networks as well as from politicians and citizen groups. While the local power context may strain these professional signals, these norms persist while local activity often does not. Second, the muffling of group turbulence may also arise from the segmented nature of the urban political system. While greater group demands may exist, they may be unfocused, contradictory and inpersistent, resulting in little policy influence.

Introduction

This paper explores a major, continuing problem in modern democracies that arises from the tension between the imperatives of popular control and leadership. A distinctive set of data, generated by mail questionnaire, is used--perceptions of contemporary urban group demands. These are drawn from a national sample of urban professional executives--school superintendents, city managers, and planning directors. The analytical approach links the perceptions of these local leaders to their community contexts and tests several propositions about political pressures and elite responses.

Participation and Bureaucracy in Democracy

A sizable literature--both normative and behavioral--has pointed to the conflict in mass-elite linkages between popular pressure to control leadership and leaders' desire for some degree of autonomy in decision making. At the local level, that theme has underlain research into community power, macroanalysis of nonpartisan-unreformed governmental structures, and protest politics (Hawley and Wirt, 1974; Hawley, 1973; Lipsky, 1970). The popular pressure arises from a basic desire to make power responsible and responsive to citizens over whom power is exercized. Leaders, while acknowledging the secular value of this pressure, find occasions when independence from it is desirable. These arise in making judgments about efficiency, utility, and other criteria of public benefit which may lack popular support. Whether in the giant of New York (Caro, 1974) or in smaller towns (Elazar, 1970; Vidich and Bensman, 1958; Alford, 1969; Eulau and Prewitt, 1973) our democratic system reflects a pervasive conflict between the impulse to participate and the filtration of that impulse.

A special aspect of this tension has been the growth of public bureaucracy at all levels of governments to administer the expanding public services which characterize this century. Such growth is attributable to the scope of modern wars, the new interdependency of modern economics, or the popular acceptance of the service state concept (Wheare, 1963). Analysis of causes is not our purpose here, although in America, Lowi's (1969a) "interest group liberalism" seems most valid. But for our purposes, the most significant sign of this total development is the presence of a large cadre of professionally trained leaders of major bureaucracies of public service.

The Administrative Stance

Efforts to mediate this tension in the past have fallen largely to the informal governance provided by party life. A familiar aspect of American democracy--party government--is one

of its manifest functions clearly sought to facilitate the delivery of public services to supportive citizens. Party mediated between the demands of efficiency, honesty, and fidelity to law, on the one hand, and the needs of citizens for prompt, effective assistance in life crises, on the other. While such machine rule has about vanished from the local scene--even Chicago is no longer the prototype--its influence can still be traced in unsuspected forms, like the correlation between Irish descendants and large numbers of public safety personnel (Clark, 1975).

A familiar triumph of nonpartisanship at the local level substituted a new set of status interests that governance could satisfy (Hays, 1964; Hawley, 1973; Counts, 1928). This new governance took several forms (Adrian, 1959). But our interest in it is that conceptually, it was only one other way of mediating citizen-leader tensions. It gave another answer to the Who Benefits? aspect of governance, but it still performed the latent function of group mediation--partly by muffling some groups (Hawley, 1973).

While party life--reformed or not--has opened channels to the pressure of popular demands, leaders of public service bureaucracies have developed a repertoire of strategies to deflect or absorb these pressures. A familiar literature, which can only be summarized, has set out these efforts. It can be as elaborate as concepts of "system maintenance" or as simple as "flak catching" (Wolfe, 1970). Whether one conceives of bureaucracy internally as heirarchy and rationality (Weber, 1922), constrained rationality (Simon, 1945), "organized anarchy" (Cohen et al., 1972), or "loose coupling" (Weick, 1976), public services traditionally have not been viewed as much open to citizen demands.

That literature finds a world whose leaders are trained (Chapin, 1976) more with maintaining their positions and resources within the organization than in meeting service goals generated from outside it. This primacy of means rather than ends, this orientation to looking inward rather than outward, produces the hallmark of modern public administration--lack of responsiveness and responsibility to public pressures. This syndrome we will term, for shorthand purposes, the Administrative Stance.

The Participatory Thrust

But there have been recurrent calls for more controls on such bureaucracies to meet democratic requirements of responsiveness and responsibility. Academics and activists have directed such calls in part against "professionalism," the autonomy granted by society to trained specialists whose services are deemed of vital importance. A "revolt of the client" has been a recurring phenomenon in Western societies, directed against professionals in public and private administration (Wirt, 1981). This call for control has also been directed against other facets of modern bureaucracy--violation of privacy, waste of resources, inertia, and so on. Whatever the charge, the call has regularly featured

the need for more popular participation in decision making.

Sometimes the participation urged is direct. For example, referenda have long played a part in educational services in many states (Hamilton and Cohen, 1974). But this form of direct democracy in some states can involve a breadth in other policy areas, as well as a detail that is staggeringly trivial, e.g., in California. As the Proposition 13 movement of tax limitation showed at the end of the 1970s, it can also have powerful consequences for local governance and services. Another form of direct participation is the citizen advisory council, a product of federal laws since the early 1960s. All manners of bureaucratic services have known such councils--education, urban planning police, social welfare, medical care, and so on (May, 1971; Krantz, 1975).

But there is also an indirect form of citizen participation thought to control leadership, but much harder to capture empirically than those above. Formulated as "the law of anticipated reaction" by Carl Freidrich or "the zone of tolerance" (McGivney and Moynihan, 1972) in administrative theory, the concept assumes that leaders are conscious of and respond to implied popular limits on their actions. It is more often been analyzed in the links between citizens and elected leaders, and hence has formed part of the pluralist concept of democracy (Dahl, 1961). There is evidence of such linkage in Prewitt and Eulau's (1969: p.440) study of city councils in homogeneous communities in California, where citizens and representatives were like-minded. A similar parallelism was found in the homogeneous districts in a national sample (Zeigler and Jennings, 1974: pp.134-135). Indeed, strong empirical support has been shown for the concept of school administrators as "representatives," given their willingness to adopt such an orientation (Mann, 1976). A major review of the concept finds support for the zone of tolerance in administrators' community relationships (Boyd, 1976b).

These modes of participation--constitute a potential challenge to the Administrative Stance and its autonomy in decision making. Clearly these modes do not operate in all jurisdictions, at all occasions, or as frequently as democratic theorists might hope. Rather, these participatory modes share with electoral modes a characteristic citizen inattention and inactivity, a dominant feature of American politics and policy making. Yet their potential can become a reality, rather like a dry arroyo unnoticed on the desert landscape until a mountain storm provides a flooding torrent. That is, given precipitating conditions, participation can become a large and threatening reality of public life, with incalculable effects upon administrators facing it. When activated, these modes of control constitute what we will term, in shorthand, the Participatory Thrust.

Where stands this tension between the Participatory Thrust and the Administrative Stance at the urban level, after 15 years

of new programmatic responses to group pressure? There has been much research, often critical, on the consequences of these innovations for urban services (German and McLaughlin, 1978), budgets, and decision making. Other analysis, more favorable to these consequences, nevertheless reports alterations in local political processes (Browning et al., 1979) and local policy distributions (Aaron, 1978).

One figure upon which much policy advocacy writing focused was the urban administrator. He (rarely she) was seen as a pivotal factor in the ills of governance, just as 80 years ago it was the party boss: Lowi's (1969b) seminal essay noted this bureaucracy was the new form of an urban machine. The Participatory Thrust produced numerous methods of retraining, replacing, or restraining such key urban executives as the school superintendent, city manager, or planning director. "New breed" executives were sought by new training, and "old guard" types were to be curbed by councils and citizen advisory groups or replaced for their insensitivity. And outside cohorts in state and federal governments were mobilized against local intransigence if all else failed.

What have been the consequences of this Participatory Thrust for these urban leaders? Has it occasioned high turnover and new roles, as reported for big city superintendents (Cuban, 1976), and a greatly increased "Political turbulence" for all school administrators (Wirt and Kirst, 1982)? Has it introduced new, more political sensitivity training in the curricula of school administrators (Sergiovanni et al., 1980) and planners (Catanese, 1978; Catanese and Farme, 1978)? Has it caused professionals to become discouraged about their work, as with planners in California (Corso et al., 1978)?

It is to such questions that a research project was directed by the authors. The central purpose had been to determine whether the recent Participatory Thrust has altered these urban executives' perceptions of their power position in local governance. The particular question addressed in this paper tests the proposition that perceived increased local public demands--expressed through group action--have modified these local executives' powers, as mediated by the context of the community they serve and by their experience.

Research Design and Methodology

Our primary framework of analysis is that of field theory. That is, the immediate field in which one interacts produces a mental map of actors, events, and behavioral norms. This understanding has featured political analysis since at least Plato's cave analogy. More recently, the importance of such perceptual fields have been featured in analysis of partisan identification, even though declining (Nie, Verba, and Petro; K, 1976: chap.4),

Congressional roles (Mathews, 1964; Fenno, 1978: chaps. 1, 3, 4), and local council "policy maps" (Eulau and Prewitt, 1973: chaps. 26-27). The concept places a cognitive screen between the stimuli of reality and the consequent behavior, a screen mediating between a confusing set of reality signals and purposive action. There is one cognition in other research relevant to this paper. It is the executive's perception of the presence of political actors within one's decisional field, and their relationship to others' and one's political self. Our hypotheses will explore linkages among these others and the self within the local political world. But it is important first to explain how we defined such perceptual and contextual concepts set out at the end of the previous section.

1. "Perceived increased local public demands--expressed through group action" is operationalized from the local executives' perceptions of the change in influence of eight groups with potential effect on local governance. The groups were: business, labor, clients, minorities, elected local officials, state officials, federal officials, and lay opinion. The shorthand term for what these executives estimated is Group Turbulence, scaled as noted below. It operationalizes the Participatory Thrust concept.

2. "Modified these local executives' powers" was operationalized by their estimates of their positions on a ten-point scale, ranging from high involvement to neutrality in the policy arena since they had entered their professions. The shorthand term for what they estimated is Executive Influence, operationalizing the Administrative Stance concept.

In both the Group Turbulence and Executive Influence concepts as operationalized, certain assumptions require justification. Both are viewed as perceived interactions which can vary in their volume--or "interest group intensity" (Zeigler and Jennings, 1974: p. 93), depending upon community context. Further, as the focus of this analysis is on the urban executive, it is this official's perception of the existential context which is crucial to his or her judgment of the effects. They may be wrong in their estimates, but these are the perceptual screens with which they work, and such perceptions can tell us much about the tensions central to this subject.

Of course, self-reporting techniques always run the risk of producing inflated estimates of worth. But if the responses substantiate the Administrative Stance noted earlier--a position openly indifferent to the democratic creed--the counter-indicated results suggest that the method is reporting honest judgments. In short, if many executives claim they do affect their local decisional processes--and they are not supposed to in democratic theory--the results seem more likely valid than if they reported they were doing what they were supposed to--merely administering.

3. "Size of community" was measured in two ways. The importance of size in differentiating types of urban politics and policies has been familiar since at least the finding that it alone accounted

for three-quarters of the variation in policies among the 1400 Governments of metropolitan New York (Wood, 1961). Census data were used but were not quite as recent as we preferred (subsequent analyses will use the 1980 census returns); too, this source does not report the population of school districts. So the executives provided current population estimates of their jurisdictions. This information is highly salient to them because it is central to many formulas which bring mandates and revenues from other governments. Too, it is more up to date, as executives know informally the 1980 census results in their locales.

4. 'Kind of community' is defined in two ways. A factor analysis of socio-economic and government resources of the communities of responding executives provides a richer picture of community context than only population can provide. Too, we requested central city-suburban-nonmetropolitan distinctions, permitting a rough but familiar distinction which research has shown exists among politics and policies in different locales.

5. "Local executives" used for this national survey supervise the largest jurisdictions in urban America, whether measured by expenditures or personnel, not to say by their significance to urban life. These are school superintendents, city managers, and planning directors (titles are used generically here, although they vary somewhat for locales). These three are alike in being key figures in each's own corporate model of governance. That is, each is appointed by an elected agency (a board or council responsible to voters), and each is empowered to administer the general policy authorized by the former. A full literature in each field attests to their importance in urban life (e.g., Cronin, 1973; Rabinowitz, 1969; Loveridge, 1971).

6. "Their experience" is defined by the number of years in one's current position, not in the profession. The former is used because the degree of responsibilities and hence pressure escalates with successively higher appointments, and it is the perspective over time at the highest level that we seek to tap. However, at one point we did ask for evaluations since entering the profession, as noted.

Central Hypotheses

The testing of the central research question rests on the assumption, well validated in urban politics, that increasing the bases of political demands increases the potential for political conflict, and further, that role behaviors differ under conflictual vs. consensual conditions (Miner, 1966; Boyd, 1976a; Cattanese, 1974: chap. 5; Rabinovitz, 1969). Consequently, the guiding hypotheses to be tested in this first report of our research are as follows:

Hypothesis: Perceived Executive Influence will not increase, and greater Group Turbulence will not be perceived, in larger cities or in different locales (city-suburban nonmetropolitan).

Hypothesis$_2$: Urban executives' perceptions of Group Turbulence will not be effected by the salience of certain groups to their positions and by some groups' newness to local policy making, holding experience constant.

Hypothesis$_3$: Urban executives' perceptions of Group Turbulence will not be effected by their experience, holding city size constant.

Hypothesis$_4$: Executive Influence with policy makers and citizens will not be conditioned by the degree of Group Turbulence, holding city size and experience constant.

Data Collection

The data for analysis consist of responses to a mail questionnaire conducted in early 1981 from school superintendents, city managers and planning directors. The sample of executives was drawn in the following manner. For superintendents, the American Association of School Administrators provided a list of middle-range cities (100-300,000) and large cities (over 300,000). Questionnaires were sent to all superintendents on the lists (175). Further, the Association provided a random sample of 75 small towns.

For city planners, questionnaires were sent to all the big-city planners listed in a roster provided by the American Planning Association. The remaining 200 planners were randomly drawn from the 1980 roster provided by the American Institute of Certified Planners. New members (as identified by the Institute) were not included in the sample, since it would be unlikely that they held a previous position.

Finally, all 175 city managers in intermediate and large cities (over 60,000) were sent questionnaires. A random sample of cities of under 5,000 and having manager-council form of government was drawn for the remaining 75 city managers. All city managers were selected from the 1980 Municipal Yearbook.

In all, 750 names were selected, one third to each executive type. There were 406 returns, or 54 percent. These returns were distributed almost equally among superintendents, managers, and planners (33, 32, and 36 percent respectively).

The questionnaire, only partly reported here, was designed with the assistance of: specialists at the University of Illinois in the training of these three executives; national officers of these executive associations; and a small set of executives from Illinois communities who field-tested it. Returns were analyzed by SPSS programs.

Distribution of Group Turbulence

Group Turbulence is central to this analysis, referring to an executive's perception of the current volume of demands compared to "earlier in this job." Asked to rate eight groups (noted earlier) along a range of this demand volume over time, each executive could mark a five-point scale from Much Less to Much More. Because our interests was in change in perceived demands as a function of community context and experience, we employed a simple measure of turbulence. The number of the eight groups marked as making More or Much More demands for each executive constituted that person's score on a Group Pressure Index (GPI), ranging from 0-8. The hypothesis underlying the GPI is that communities--and their perceived pressure matrix--should be quite different for executives who reported no or little change rather than much change. Table 1 displays the distribution of the perception of their demand contexts by executive types on the GPI. From these data, it can be seen that a little more than half (54 percent) of the respondents perceived that four or more of the groups had increased their demands. Superintendents perceived the most increased demands: 62 percent perceived this in four or more groups vs. 54 and 46 percent for managers and planners. Further, superintendents had the highest model category of demands--six groups. Overall, Table 1 indicates that all three executive types perceived increased group demands and only 4.6 percent reported no increase.

TABLE 1

Percentage Distribution of Group Pressure Index by Executive Type

	Number of Groups Perceived as Increasing Demands									
Executives	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N
Superintendents	5.8	3.3	20.8	12.5	20.0	15.8	11.7	7.5	2.5	131
Manager	2.7	3.5	3.5	19.5	24.8	16.8	15.9	7.1	6.2	127
Planner	1.5	1.5	4.5	19.4	19.4	26.1	14.9	6.7	6.0	144
All Executives	3.3	2.7	9.6	17.2	21.3	19.9	14.2	7.1	4.6	402

There was no expectation that each subset of executives would view each group in the same way. After all, the three do not overlap in function and only rarely in authority. Rather, our expectation was that executives would report a segmented policy politics, with each executive type reporting a different perception of its demand world. Table 2 enables us to test this empirical assumption.

TABLE 2

Frequency Distribution of "More" and "Much More" Demands by Executive and Group Types

Demand Group:	Supt.	Manager	Planner
Business	48% (62)[1]	45% (55)	52% (73)
Labor	62% (81)	46% (57)	14% (20)
Clientele	52% (66)	39% (46)	39% (54)
Minorities	50% (63)	35% (41)	35% (49)
Elected Local Officials	34% (44)	60% (73)	66% (94)
State Officials	50% (65)	42% (51)	34% (48)
Federal Officials	54% (70)	46% (56)	40% (56)
Lay Opinion	61% (77)	46% (56)	60% (84)

[1] The first figure indicates the percent of respondents perceiving that the group had increased its demands. The second figure indicates the N of each executive type; multiple choices of groups means that the Ns add up to more than the total of each executive type.

Table 2 indicates that there are indeed differing perceptions of demand worlds. While there are some similarities among executives (e.g., Business groups), each type generally perceives a different cluster of groups to be salient. For example, the largest discrepancy occurs with Labor. While 62 percent of the superintendents perceive that Labor has increased demands, only 14 percent of the planners also perceive this, and city managers fall in between. Conversely, while the fewest superintendents identify Elected Local Officials as making increased demands, most of both the managers and planners perceive that group to have much increased demands. Overall, superintendents appear to be experiencing the most in increased demands. The reasons, not explored here, are set out elsewhere (Wirt, 1976).

Distribution of Perceived Policy Involvement

A second perception sought was the degree of movement away from policy neutrality toward more involvement in the policy arena . . . since your first administrative appointment with the profession. The executive could reply on a 9-point scale from Neutral to High Involvement by drawing an arrow on the scale. The arrow's base marked the past and its head the present situation

in changing policy involvement (an X was used to mark no change). With this device we tested the respondent's sense of the changing nature of the profession as experienced throughout his or her career.

The results were remarkably uniform, for there was no significant difference among the three executives in reporting their heavily increased involvement. Of the three executives, 68-77 percent registered some degree of increased policy involvement, and only about 5 percent reported any decrease (the remainder marked no change). This self-reporting is one measure of validating the concepts of Executive Influence and Administrative Stance noted earlier. Too, it confirms what scholars have long contended, that there is no line between policy making and administration, and that administrators increasingly define their work as influencing the policy they are thereafter to administer. While there is some difference in the range of perceived increased involvement (not analyzed in this paper), the strength of the perception for all executives is the major descriptive finding.

Distribution of Executive Influence

Involvement is not the same as influence, however. So the executives were asked to use the same arrow and scale device to judge the degree of acceptance of their professional judgments, by 1) their superordinate, authoritative agency (board, council, commission) and also by 2) citizens in the community. On this measure, they were asked to compare this acceptance "earlier in the job" presently held, not since they entered the profession. With this measure we sought to tap perceptions common to the highest level of the profession by persons with some experience.

In both cases of their authorities and citizens, there was no significant difference. Most of these executives reported increases in acceptance of their judgments by their authorities (50-57 percent) and by citizens (55-62 percent). Few reported decreasing acceptance (7.5 vs. 3.0 percent respectively). Too, a strong minority reported no change in political and citizen acceptance, about 40 percent for both. A self-inflating factor could operate here, of course, as professionals like to think their advice is acted upon. However, another factor may work against this inflation, namely, these professionals' reticence to report publicly their real influence with lay authorities. The data do not permit estimating the effects of these counter-currents. But taken in conjunction with reported increases in perceived demands in Table 2, the inference is clear that such turbulence has not deferred these executives from advancing their own judgments and gaining acceptance from the political sources that count in democratic politics.

We see in these descriptive findings a picture of local executives as "politicians." That is, they negotiate among con-

flicting demands in order to secure adoption of their own preferred position, as different professions increasingly report (Cuban, 1976; Kntanese, 1978; Katanese and Farma, 1978). They may never be the politician that Robert Moses was in such matters (Caro, 1974). They may still adopt the role concept of being a neutral technician providing the "one best system" (Callahan, 1962). Yet majorities of all three executives report themselves to be much more involved in policy making. While involvement and success are not the same, in both measures they report a greater degree of policy participation and so a greater chance for success for professional ideas about urban policy making than their public image presumes.

Community Context and Perceived Demands

As description is not explanation, we wish to explore the four hypotheses set out earlier on the linkages between community context and group demands. The following analysis does not report all the findings from the survey, but focuses upon some basic propositions.

Perceived Turbulence and Community Context

Is it the case that Group Turbulence as perceived by these executives is not a function of urban qualities, such as size, socio-economic status, and government structure?

In testing this proposition in the usual null hypothesis form, the dependent variable--Group Turbulence--was measured in each city by the number of groups (0-8) perceived to have increased their demands upon the responding executive. But there were two ways to operationalize community context, by using a factor analysis and a single measure--total population. The first sought to employ as rich a measure of community variety as possible, while the second used a single variable others found to be a parsimonious measure of that variety. In both measures, however, regressions were used to test for association between community context and turbulence.

The factor analysis (principal factoring orthogonal rotation) was run on 222 cities over 25,000 for which full data were available. There resulted 5 factors, accounting for 100 percent of the communality. Seen in Table 3, these factors are dominated, as expected, by population and a related set of measuresoof local systems' resources for governance; half the variance lies with this factor. Other factors suggest citizen status, reformed governance, region, and suburbanism. Combined, these dimensions provide a rich set of perspectives on urban variety.

The next step was to use each city's loading on each factor for a multiple regression on the dependent variable, the Group Pressure Index score reported by an executive for that city. The result was clear. No matter the executive considered, these

characteristics did little to predict the respondents' scores on the GPI. The R^2s for the equations of the superintendents, managers and planners were .13, .04 and .11 respectively; none was significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 3

Factor Analysis of Executives' Community Contexts

Variables	Size	Status	Reformed Govt.	Region	Suburban	
Population	.903					
General Revenue	.920					
General Expenditure	.921					
Debt	.897					
Per Capita Income		.929				
Median Education		.457				
% Population Black		.451		-.476		
Type of Election			.500			
Form of Government			-.571			
% Population Foreign Stock				.541		
% Population Spanish				.556		
% Owner-Occupied Housing					-.580	
Percent of Variance	55.3	18.8	11.3	8.7	6.0	100%

Because our measure of population was not congruent with the time of this survey, we asked each executive to report the current population estimate for that jurisdiction. This single variable was used in a regression against the Group Turbulence Index for each of the three executive groups. Here we used a larger set of cities (406), ranging from 100 to over one million. The population was expressed in absolute size.[1] That population was not a good predictor of GPI scores. The R^2s were abysmal, ranging from .01 to .07.

The null hypothesis is clearly accepted in the preceding analysis. That is, the degree of perceived turbulence, for all executive types is not at all related to the size of one's jurisdiction. Similarly, other attributes of community life--such as reformism, citizen status, suburbanism, and region--also fail to trace a linkage to perceived Group Turbulence. The considerable mix of American cities does not predict the urban conflict that their executives perceive. The results suggest, rather, that Group Turbulence may be so pervasive on the urban scene that it is a systemic factor working there.

Group Salience and Professional Tenure

Is it the case that these perceptions of Group Turbulence are not differentiated by the group's salience to a profession, regardless of executive experience?

Another potential explanation of perceptions may be one's length of experience in office. That is, the more one has been in the office, the more one should be aware that the volume of demands is greater now than in earlier periods of time. However, one knowing only the recent volume of demands lacks the experience to judge its degree of change. We explore the role of experience by relating the years in present position to the Groups Turbulence Index.

TABLE 4

Relationship Between Perceived Group Turbulence and Experience

	Mean GPI by Executive Type		
Experience	Superintendents	Managers	Planners
5 yrs.	4.06 (65)*	3.34 (77)	3.15 (75)
6-9 yrs.	4.06 (34)	3.65 (17)	3.42 (26)
10+ yrs.	4.62 (21)	4.21 (19)	3.91 (33)
Total	4.16	3.53	3.39

*n of cases

As Table 4 shows, there emerges little significant difference in mean GPI scores, by executive type, except among the least and most experienced planners (significance = .003). The direction of the means is as the hypothesis suggests, i.e., more perceived demands with more experience, but little of it is significant. Too, the superintendents perceive a larger volume of demands at each level of experience and overall, than do the other two types. The former's total mean is significantly higher than that of the managers (significance = .013) and planners (.001). Again, all this suggests the superintendents' world is perceived differently, but little of the total Table 4 supports a significant linkage between experience and GPI.

Another measure was devised to test the perceived volume and its relationship to tenure. For each demand group perceived, we looked for differences in the mean amount of demands made between each experience category, by executive type. However, difference of means tests revealed no significant differences. In short, by our measures the length of years in one's current position was not associated with perception of Group Turbulence. When even those with short experience report increased demands, then turbulence must be pervasive throughout urban political systems.

The Urban Context and Perception of Turbulence

Is it the case that executives' perceptions of Group Turbulence are not a function of their urban context, as influenced by length of their experience?

We noted in treating Hypothesis$_1$ the lack of a linkage of population size to reported Group Turbulence. This finding suggested systemic factors at work that stimulated conflict without regard to size. Next, Hypothesis$_2$ explored the influence of experience upon perceived turbulence, and found none existed. What is necessary next is to test the relative influence of city size and experience upon perceived turbulence. The theoretical assumptions undergirding such tests are straightforward. The greater variety of urban context may well generate more perceived turbulence regardless of city size, the more one perceives increased turbulence; too, newer executives may lack a grasp of earlier, less turbulent urban politics.

A simple test of these possibilities was to regress size and experience against the GPI. Size was central to one of the factors discussed earlier; it also could be measured by total population alone. However, these measures of size and the years of experience showed the same result. Neither predicted the degree of perceived Group Turbulence; the R^2s ranged only from .01 to .13. Again, the results suggest a systemic demand pattern in urban policy making, regardless of the type of executive, of community or of experience.

Group Turbulence and Executive Influence

Finally, is it the case that Group Turbulence does not influence Executive Influence regardless of other factors like community context and experience?

We have found little evidence of association between the size and variety of the community context or the experience of three sets of urban executives and their perceptions of the increase in group demands in recent years. There was much evidence reported from the three respondents that what we have termed Participatory Thrust has definitely been perceived on the increase. What is not evident in the preceding analysis, however, is whether Administrative Stance conditions prevail. That is, on the measures of Executive Influence that we asked respondents to mark, using the scaled-arrow technique noted earlier, could we determine whether increases in Group Turbulence depressed Executive Influence, as democratic theory so often claims should happen?

To measure Executive Influence, we altered each person's own arrow so as to subtract what <u>had been</u> one's influence with what it now <u>was</u>. As the original scale ran from 0-9, a revised scale covered -9 to +9. One receiving a +9 on this revision had seen

one's influence originally at 0 but now at 9; a -9 score started at +9 but now is at 0. The resulting 19-interval scale became our dependent variable, with two versions of changed influence--one each for political officials and citizens. Against these were regressed our measures of Group Turbulence (Group Pressure Index), years of experience, and two measures of size (factor of size and total population). Two measures of perceived Executive Influence became the dependent variables. The independent variables consisted of five factor score loadings, years of experience (under or over five years in position), and the GPI.

If, as some argue, administrators withstand the buffets of group pressures, then there should be no relationship expressed in these regressions: more group turbulence would not be associated with executive influence. However, if as others argue, the Participatory Thrust can overcome such resistance because of its power or legitimacy, then the associations should be negative; reports of more turbulence would be associated with less executive influence.

In the resulting 12 regression equations shown in Table 5, the dependent variables were the executives' reports of acceptance by their political authorities and citizens of their ideas since entering their current position. The independent variables were size (both in a factor score and total population), experience, and the GPI.

TABLE 5

Relation of Size, GPI and Experience to Political and Citizen Acceptance of Executives

Dependent Variable	Superintendents	Managers	Planners
Political Acceptance[1]			
R^2	.05	.14	.01
significance	.137	.001	.741
Citizen Acceptance[1]			
R^2	.03	.09	.01
significance	.389	.013	.705
Political Acceptance[2]			
R^2	.24	.07	.02
significance	.025	.771	.978
Citizen Acceptance[2]			
R^2	.15	.06	.04
significance	.225	.320	.892

[1]Acceptance = experience and Group Pressure Index and jurisdiction population.

[2]Acceptance = experience and Group Pressure Index and city size and race and reform government and region and suburban.

In the resulting 12 regressions, there was no evidence that the GPI related to either kind of acceptance. No relationship was found for managers or planners in their reports of citizen or political authorities' acceptance. For superintendents, only one of the four equations revealed a possible linkage (R^2 = .24), but even here the GPI was not significant (.073) Nor was the size factor significant; rather, experience, reformed government, and suburbanism are the elements that relate the two. That is, superintendents who report greater acceptance of their views by political authorities are more likely to be less experienced and to work in a nonpartisan, suburban environment. This finding points again to the special policy world of this particular executive.

Let us not lose sight of the major thrust of the concluding analysis set out in Table 5. It suggests strongly that executives, while perceiving more group demands, do not find this Participatory Thrust inhibiting the authorities. In short, we see throughout this paper evidence of the strength of the Administrative Stance concept. Executives see more turbulence, but it doesn't interfere with their influence in policy making. Indeed, they report very strongly that their policy influence has grown over time.

Why should the Participatory Thrust be evaded? The literature suggests at least two major reasons. First, executives are also professionals, and by definition (Wirt, 1981) they receive their signals for action and their normative values about policy from professional networks, as well as from politicians and citizen groups. So, the strength of Executive Influence lies in that acceptance of the larger norms of the profession. Of course, local power contexts strain and deflect these external signals to the executive. But over time, the professional norms persist, while local action often does not. And so over time, the external norm becomes local policy. That may be why these executives can report the contradictory perceptions of greater pressure vs. greater executive policy influence and acceptance.

A second reason exists for the dilution of the Participatory Thrust, which is in the nature of the policy worlds of urban America. The muffling of group turbulence reported here arises in part from the segmented nature of the urban political system, which produces what Yates (1976) has termed "street-fighting pluralism." That is, when groups inject new ideas into the local policy system, they face

> ...a political and administrative system that is fragmented to the point of chaos. Further, there is no coherent administrative order to implement and control new policies. What exists instead is an extreme pluralism of political, administrative, and community interests... and in this context, the likely fate of the new policy initiative is that it will be ripped apart in the street fight between political interests. (Yates, 1976: p.149).

So our executives can report greater group demands, but they are too often unfocused, confused, contradictory, and, in time, lack persistance. In the want the professional local executive has the resources that count-maze wisdom, persistance, group cohorts, etc.

Future analysis of these data will explore other consequences of the executive's role-taking and career development. But there, as in this paper, we face a local figure who is part of a natural network of resources and a local subculture of administration that makes him or her truly a political actor.

Footnote

1. No difference was found using this total measure and a five-category range; the latter, however, is inappropriate for regression analysis. An alternative measure of size was the rough but familiar distinctions among central city, suburban and non-metropolitan areas. However, it produced no strong relationship with the GPI; again, this categorization is inappropriate for a regression analysis.